

WANDERERS HAD TO FIGHT FOR POINT

By "SPOT KICK"

Wycombe Wanderers 2;
Ilford 2.

FIGHTING back after the set-back of an unlucky goal early on, Wycombe Wanderers just about deserved a share of the Isthmian League points, against lowly-placed Ilford.

But again in this display there was little to inspire enthusiasm or calculated to impart any end-of-season boost to the Loakes Park "gate," even more sparse on Saturday in the bitter wind and in face of the counter-draw of the Amateur Cup final.

Ilford's verve and vigour belied their humble League rating. Their attack, with volatile Alfie Christmas moving from right wing to centre-forward, was brisk and purposeful.

The Wycombe defence, usually the most dependable department, had a jolt in the first ten minutes — and never really recovered their poise. Certainly John Beck found little time to indulge his partiality for the sally upfield.

EARLY SHOCK

The jolt for Wycombe, influencing the pattern of play in the first half, came when John Fisher was knocked out in a head-on clash with Ilford's inside-left, Jackson. Almost simultaneously Alistair Lewis, attempting to clear, crashed the ball into his own goal.

It was a bonus which Ilford promptly invested in an excess of enthusiasm which kept the Wanderers preoccupied in defence for most of the first half. And it came as little surprise when the vigilant Christmas smashed in a second, seven minutes before the interval.

Wycombe's nearest attempts had come from Worley, often

conspicuous with pedestrian pyrotechnics on the right-wing but so often prone to splutter out ineffectually at the crucial moment. But it was Worley who revived hopes just before half-time, to keep the Wanderers in the fight with a brilliant goal direct from a corner-kick.

NEW LEASE

The goal gave Wycombe a new lease of life in the second-half and for the first time there was some semblance of cohesion in the attack, with wing halves Thomas and Gale showing marked improvement and Worley and Horseman the live-wires of the front line.

It was in the spearhead that Wycombe failed. Tommy Holmes, back in the line again, and potentially Wycombe's best ball player, positioned himself well enough to make some of his moves look leisurely but most of his shrewd passes were wasted. Pullin looked out of his element as an inside man and James, for all his pertinacity, generally had insufficient tricks to outwit the watchful Ilford backs.

He got the equaliser, with a quick shot into the roof of the net, during one of a series of Wycombe assaults in their 20-minute spell of ascendancy after half-time — but missed several other chances.

So far from pressing home their advantage at this stage, the Wanderers declined for the rest of the game and Ilford, staying the pace better, regained the initiative towards the close. And Christmas was unlucky not to claim a winner on at least two occasions—once when he stunned Brown with a power-drive and then lobbed the ball tamely over the bar at a second attempt, and again when he hit the upright from a few yards range.